

State Advisory for Farmers during COVID 19 lockdown

General precautions and safety measures in harvesting, post-harvest operations, storage and marketing of produce

In order to avoid the field level contagious spread of Corona virus in agrarian activities, farmers are advised to follow the following precautions:

- In case of manual field operations of harvesting/ picking, accomplish the operation in 4-5feet spaced strips assigning one strip to one person. This will ensure adequate spacing between the engaged labour.
- All the persons engaged should use masks and ensure hand washing with soap at reasonable intervals.
- Maintain safe distance of 3-4 feet during rest, taking of meals, transfer of produce at collection point, loading/unloading.
- Stagger the field operations wherever possible and avoid engaging more number of persons on the same day.
- Engage only the healthy persons to the extent possible and after reasonable enquiry as to avoid the entry of any suspect or likely carrier during field activity.
- Prefer mechanized operations over the manual ones wherever feasible. Only the essential numbers of persons should be allowed to accompany the machine.
- All machines should be sanitized at the entry point and at regular intervals. All transport vehicles, gunny bags or other packaging material should also be sanitized.
- The collection of the produce may be done in small heaps spaced at 3-4 feet and field level processing should be assigned to 1-2 persons/heap to avoid crowding.
- In case the farm level storage is possible, avoid immediate rush to the market.
- Follow the standard safety measures during the visit to market for the purchase of inputs/sale of produce.

State-specific guidelines and advisories

Tamil Nadu

Guidelines: D.O. Letter No.87/ APC&PS/2020 dated 24/03/2020; G.O No.232/ 27.03.2020 & G.O. No.152 of Dept of family welfare dated 23.03.2020.

1. Farmers can sell their vegetables and fruits in the local and wholesale markets and Uzhavar sandhais which is opened in the local area without restrictions. Farmers can avail the support from Dept of Agricultural marketing and Agri business. Crowding to be avoided and isolation distance of 3 feet to be strictly adhered to.
2. Farmers to carry a copy of the D.O letter No.87/ APC&PS/2020 dated 24/03/2020 for unhindered transport of their agricultural produce to markets.
3. Restriction of movement of persons under the G.O is not applicable for farmers for selling agricultural produce in the local and wholesale markets and Uzhavar sandhais.

4. Primary processing centre under TN supply chain management will run with one AAO for farmers benefit.
5. Farmers can use the Integrated Agricultural Extension centre (IAECs) and sub AECs for purchase of Inputs for farming.
6. The seed storage, testing, processing, grading and packing facilities of government and private sectors will be running for the farmers use.
7. The seeds of all crops will be available for farmers from private seed companies for kharif season 2020. Seed companies to ensure that all seeds are available to farmers.
8. Farmers can buy the fertilizers from shops in the local area. Farmers are advised to maintain 3 feet distance while purchasing.
9. Farmers can store their produce up to 180 days in the godowns at regulated markets. Exemption towards paying rent for godowns given up to 30 days.
10. Farmers can avail 75% of the market value of the produce or up to 3 lakhs (whichever is lesser). The loan tenure is 180 days @ 5% interest rate for first 30 days
11. Farmers can also avail the cold storage facilities to store perishables
12. Movement of cattle, poultry birds, fish, eggs, meat and feed for cattle and poultry as well as the feed ingredients is permitted

Advisory

- Rabi paddy is in grain filling to grain hardening stage which is to be harvested using combines. Pre-cautions and safety measures of workers engaged in repair, maintenance and harvesting operation with combiners is to be ensured.
- Groundnut and sesame crops are in maturity to harvesting stage. Manually harvesting followed by machine stripping of pods in groundnut is to be adopted by following safety measures of personal hygiene and proper cleaning of shared equipment
- Pulses in maturity to nearing harvesting stage. Manual and combine harvesting is to be done following safety measures
- Maize is in cob formation stage and measures for fall army worm management required as incidence is noticed. Need based recommended control measures to be taken up.
- Sugarcane is in vegetative stage and protection sprays/ release of bioagents against early shoot borer may be required.
- Mango in fruiting stage (marble to lemon size), fruit drop is a major issue which requires nutrient application through foliar sprays. Mixing of ingredients to be done by following safety precautions.
- Banana is in vegetative to bunching stage, tapioca at maturity stage; citrus, cashew, papaya, turmeric, water melon and vegetables (brinjal, bhendi and gourds) nearing harvest manually. Safety precautions to be followed at every step of harvesting, processing, storage, transport and marketing operations.

- Spiraling whitefly is a major problem faced by coconut farmers. Recommended control measures as advised by KVKs/ SAUs to be followed. Chemical sprays to be avoided against this pest.
- Shortage of labour for farm operations is a critical concern as most of the crops are nearing harvesting stage. Use of machinery wherever feasible from custom hiring centres for harvesting is advised by following all safety measures of personal hygiene and social distancing.
